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Research evidence indicates that racial awareness, including differential preference based on such an awareness, is quite pervasive and develops very early in life. In an effort to investigate the existence of racial awareness as manifested in differential preference in preschool children, this two-part study was conducted. In part one, 40 objects considered to have differential affective qualities, on the basis of race, were evaluated as good or bad by 37 Negro Head Start children and 30 preschool white children. No significant differences in evaluation of the objects between the two races were found. In part two, 15 of the children of each race were asked to guess in which of two closed boxes, white and black, each of the 22 most clearly evaluated objects of the original 40 were to be found. It was hypothesized that the children's racial attitudes would be indirectly indicated by a finding that the children put negatively evaluated objects in the black box and positive objects in the white box. This hypothesis was supported, only more so for the white children than the black children. The comments of the children supported the hypothesis that racial attitudes determined the guessing of certain objects as being in a certain box. (WD)

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The Relationship Between Race and Perception of Racially-Related Stimuli in Preschool Children*

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Several studies (Morland, 1962; Stevenson and Stewart, 1958; Goodman, 1952; Ammons, 1950; Radke, Trager, and Davis, 1949; Horowitz, 1939; and Criswell, 1939) have provided substantial evidence that racial awareness, including differential preference, is pervasive and that it develops very early in life. Many prominent psychologists have commented upon the unfortunate consequences for the Negro child of internalizing the unfavorable racial attitudes of the larger society into his own psychological make-up. Bronfenbrenner (1967) has stated, "Not only does the Negro child feel powerless; he feels worthless as well. At the core of this sense of inferiority is the awareness of being black. From the age of 3 onward, Negro children begin to prefer white skin to black and to think of Negroes in general and themselves in particular as ugly, unwanted, and 'bad'."

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Landreth and Johnson (1953) have noted, "Though living in a democracy, many Negro citizens apparently learn by three years of age that skin color is important, that white is to be desired, dark to be regretted."

In order to assess racial attitudes in white preschool children, Williams and Roberson (1967) combined story-telling with pictures of white and black animals or persons, and asked the children such questions as, "Which horse is bad?" "Which is the pretty girl?" etc. They reported that 86.5% of the children scored in a prejudiced direction. Black figures were evaluated as "bad," "ugly," "dirty," "naughty," "stupid," and "mean." White figures, on the other hand, were evaluated as "good," "happy," "nice," and "clean." In another study, (Williams, 1964) in which young adults were tested, the adjectives applied to white were "good," "active," and "weak" and the adjectives applied to black were "bad," "passive," and "strong." This study and two others (Williams, 1966; Renninger and Williams, 1966) demonstrated that the colors black and white, by themselves, have connotative meanings which are substantially similar to the meanings commonly associated with racial membership. The color-meaning factor, Williams speculated, may act as either a contributing or a reinforcing factor for prejudice.

The present study involved two stages: first, a normative study which compared white and Negro childrens' evaluations of assorted objects, and second, an experiment to see whether or not good objects were associated with white stimuli and bad

objects were associated with black stimuli. Differences in evaluations of objects were expected on the basis that white and Negro children have different cultural and experiential backgrounds. The second part of the investigation is related to children's introjections of racial stereotypes and is pertinent to the development of positive or negative self-concepts of white and Negro children.

METHOD

On the normative study, 37 Negro children from one local Head Start Center were tested; and two groups of white children were tested; 16 from a private, segregated school, and 14 from another private, segregated school. Male and female children were represented equally. The first private preschool served families of a higher socioeconomic position than the second private preschool, but the families involved were all from the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

Forty objects were presented one at a time to each child. The objects selected by the experimenter were chosen for study because of their presumed positive or negative affect quality.

Children indicated their judgment by placing objects in front of either a painted smiling face or a painted frowning face. Objects which were judged spontaneously as good or bad by the child were scored as either +2 or-2. If E had to ask the child whether an object was good or bad, the judgment scored as either +1 or -1. Finally, if the child reversed his judgment on an object, it was scored as 0. In order to facilitate

statistical analysis, +3 was added to each score; thus in the averages presented in Table I a score of 1 = a very negative evaluation, 2 = a negative evaluation; 3 = a neutral evaluation; 4 = a positive evaluation; and 5 = a very positive evaluation.

The second study related the evaluations of the objects to children's guesses as to which box the object was in, a white box or a black box. Several weeks after gathering the normative data, E again tested each child. The procedure was to place a white and a black box (6" x 7" x 9" each) on a table before the child. Each box had been filled with identical objects and then nailed shut. The E informed the child that different objects were in the boxes and that he was to guess which object was in which box. The E turned each box over several times in order to provide auditory cues to the child. The E presented the objects one at a time, and the child responded by indicating which box he thought contained the object.

Fifteen children of each race were included in the second study. Only the 22 objects which had elicited a clear evaluative response, positive or negative, were presented to the child.

After the testing for each study, each child was given a lollipop and asked not to discuss the proceedings with the other children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Normative Study. The forty objects, their order of presentation, and their average ratings by group are presented in Table I (Appendix).

Comparisons of ratings for each object were made between the three groups. The statistical procedure was to first perform an analysis of variance between groups, and then, on statistically significant objects, to perform an individual degrees of freedom test. None of the objects were differentially rated by the two racial groups. Although differences were expected, the results are consistent with an earlier study by Stabler, Spruill, and Eakin (1967). The absence of differences indicated that local white and Negro sub-cultures are essentially similar in their effects on these particular evaluative processes of children.

Two items elicited significantly different responses between the two white groups: the toy car and the knife. Since the primary interest of the second stage of the research involved racial comparisons, these two items were eliminated from the experimental study.

Contents of White and Black Boxes. The underlying premise of the second study was that children would generalize black to Negro and white to Caucasian, and that attitudes toward race would thereby be indicated by the decisions of the children. The procedure provided a structured and disguised measure of children's attitudes toward race (Campbell, 1950). The assumption was supported by spontaneous comments of the children. For example, when a white girl volunteered that "the bad things go in here" (pointing to the black box), E asked her why she thought the black box was for bad things, and she replied, "Mommy doesn't like niggers."

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A X^2 analysis was performed which collapsed the data over race and tested to see whether or not any objects had been "placed," i.e., guessed as present, significantly more often in one of the boxes. One object, the scorpion, was found to have been placed more often in the black box ($X^2 = 4.38$, df = 1, $p < .05$). (The marble and the comb were placed most often in the white box but the actual number of placements was just short of statistical significance.) A related X^2 analysis was then performed to find whether or not there was differential placement of objects when each race was considered separately. The objects were not placed differentially in the boxes by Negro children, but white children significantly more often placed the comb ($X^2 = 4.04$, df = 1, $p < .05$) and the winner's cup ($X^2 = 4.04$, df = 1, $p < .05$) in the white box and the crawfish ($X^2 = 5.64$, df = 1, $p < .05$) in the black box. (The scorpion was also placed more often in the black box by white children but the X^2 was just short of statistical significance.)

The most critical statistical evaluations involved t-tests which compared the number of "hits," i.e., the actual number of times that the children's guesses corresponded to predictions, with the number of times the object would have been so-placed if only chance factors had been involved. Since the direction of placement was predicted for each object, one-tailed tests of significance were used.

When considering <u>total</u> number of hits, the data for all <u>Ss</u>, for white <u>Ss</u> alone, and for Negro <u>Ss</u> alone, were

statistically significant ($t = 2.92$, $p < .05$; $t = 2.40$, $p < .05$; and $t = 1.70$, $p < .05$ respectively). When data for all Ss were included, the number of correct predictions of placement of positively rated objects into the white box was statistically significant ($t = 2.97$, $p < .01$); and the number of correct predictions of placement of negatively rated objects into the black box was statistically significant ($t = 2.06$, $p < .01$). The data on white Ss alone was also statistically significant: "good" objects were more often put in the white box ($t = 2.57$, $p < .01$) and "bad" objects were more often put in the black box ($t = 1.89$, $p < .05$). The data for Negro Ss alone was not statistically significant either in placement of "good" objects in the white box or in placement of "bad" objects in the black box.

In order to check for the possibility of a racial difference in mean number of hits three t-tests were performed which compared mean number of hits for whites with mean number of hits for Negroes. No statistically significant differences between races were obtained in placing negatively rated objects in the black box, in placing positively rated objects in the white box, or in considering total number of hits regardless of color of box.

The basic prediction, that children would guess that the "good" objects were in the white box and that the "bad" objects were in the black box, was supported by the data. The data for white Ss, however, was more in agreement with theoretical predictions than was the data for Negro Ss. Apparently, the Negro

children performed much the same as did the white children, but they did so less consistently. The evidence from this study suggests that the racial attitudes of the larger society have been incorporated by preschool children of both races, but by white children more so than by Negro children.

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Appendix

TABLE I

RATINGS OF OBJECTS FOR ALL GROUPS

Object		White (PKK)	White (JGP)	Negro
1.	Toy dog	5.00	4.71	4.46
2.	Rubber snake[a] (-)[b]	1.25	2.00	1.84
3.	Nickel (+)	4.88	5.00	4.72
4.	Vomit (plastic) (-)	1.88	1.64	2.43
5.	Lollipop	4.81	4.86	4.56
6.	Skull (plastic) (-)	1.50	1.86	2.57
7.	Bracelet	5.00	4.71	4.49
8.	Gun	3.25	3.71	4.05
9.	Toy car	5.00	4.07	4.76
10.	Smashed tin can (-)	1.75	2.57	2.16
11.	Toy watch (+)	5.00	4.71	4.59
12.	Whip scorpion (=)	1.50	1.00	1.56
13.	Toy Balloon (+)	4.87	4.93	4.73
14.	Knife	1.56	3.07	2.92
15.	Scissors	3.81	4.00	3.46
16.	Spider (-)	1.75	1.57	1.46
17.	Necklace	4.93	4.71	4.59
18.	Toilet (plastic, small)	4.50	4.21	4.48
19.	Yoyo (+)	4.50	4.86	4.68
20.	Crawfish (-)	1.25	1.57	1.76
21.	Toy airplane	4.75	4.43	4.62
22.	Cigarette butt (-)	1.75	2.78	2.40
23.	Harmonica (+)	5.00	4.43	4.76

TABLE I (cont'd.)

Object	White (PKK)	White (JGP)	Negro
24. Razor blade	2.44	3.21	2.68
25. Marble (+)	5.00	4.43	4.62
26. Scorpion (-)	1.50	1.86	1.49
27. Matches	2.12	3.14	2.78
28. Bullet	3.56	3.64	3.78
29. Ring (+)	4.50	4.86	4.78
30. Syringe	2.56	2.57	2.94
31. Pencil	4.50	3.71	4.49
32. Dirty tissue (-)	1.50	2.64	1.73
33. Flower (plastic)	4.75	4.07	4.49
34. Dice	4.88	4.43	4.03
35. Winner's cup (+)	4.75	4.43	4.46
36. Worm (plastic)	2.50	2.00	2.59
37. Comb (+)	4.31	4.43	4.78
38. Sticker (plant seed with sharp points)	3.19	3.00	2.19
39. Bubble gum (+)	4.69	4.43	4.65
40. Rat (plastic) (-)	2.12	2.21	2.49

a. Unless otherwise indicated, animals were actual specimens.

b. All objects used in the second study are followed by a + or - indicating valence.